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SHOW DEMONSTRATES APPALOOSAS' VERSATILITY

The Saskatchewan Appaloosa Horse Club's Spring Show on May 3 and 4 will feature a broad program with classes for all ages. The show will take place in Moose Jaw at the Golden Mile Arena.

The Spring Show celebrates the defining features of the Appaloosa breed and its diversity. "Most people think of the Appaloosa as a spotted horse, but that is not wholly true," explained club President Karen Bedford. "Appaloosas can come in all colours, and they can come from a horse that most people would think would be a Quarter Horse because it doesn't have the Appaloosa markings. But we have Appaloosas with solid colours right up to the well-known spotted horse."

The breed dates back to an affiliation with the Nez Perce Indians of the United States. "They bred them because they're such a durable, strong, willing horse," Bedford said. "I believe most of us have continued to breed Appaloosas because of their kind nature and their very versatile skills."

Over the two days of the show, 170 classes are offered, including halter events, Western and English riding – and jumping – and youth classes and games. The games include flag picking, pole bending and barrel and stake racing.

To celebrate Mother's Day, there is a special walk-trot class offered on Sunday where the only registration criterion is that the participant is a mother.

The Hunter Saddle Stake and the Western Pleasure Stake classes offer cash prizes. Otherwise, participants compete for points to contribute to their national standings.

This year's Spring Show will incorporate learning opportunities through a Saturday night presentation by Sheila Archer, a well-known researcher in the equine world.

Archer's presentation will focus on equine genetics. "There is an awful lot of work being done now out of Saskatoon," Bedford added. "Sheila Archer works with several scientists out of the United States on genetic information that relates specifically to the Appaloosa horse."

Another new addition to this year's show is a helmet rule. All youth aged 13 and under must wear helmets to ensure safety. For certain classes, all riders under 19 must be protected. "All of us have seen a horse accident and it can be very serious," Bedford said. "That's why we have chosen to go with helmets for our youth. Hopefully, in the next year or two, we'll see many more helmets on older riders, too."

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The show will feature approximately 50 horses from across the Prairie Provinces. The Saskatchewan Appaloosa Horse Club Spring Show is open to the public and is free to attend. "We welcome all people in and around Moose Jaw who would want to come and see our beautiful horses."

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